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INDEX:

- (1) Japan's sharing of US Marines relocation cost: Defense chief Nukaga's two preparatory steps -- secret meeting with US ambassador to Japan, visit to National Arlington National Cemetery to reduce Japan's actual spending less than that of US
- (2) Japan-US alliance entering new phase, with Japan folded into US global strategy
- (3) Japan's share of cost of US force realignment: 3 trillion yen still a "conservative estimate"; Is Japan an automated cash dispenser? Swelling defense spending for building anti-terrorism networks
- (4) South Korean president aims to beef up political power by taking tough stance against Japan over Takeshima (Dokdo) issue; Japanese government perplexed by his statement; Repairing strained bilateral ties difficult for time being
- (5) Bright and dark sides of five years of Koizumi politics (Part 1): Koizumi-Bush honeymoon relationship strengthened Japan-US alliance
- (6) Bright and dark sides of five years of Koizumi politics (Part 2): Consideration for ally boosting Japan's base burden
- (7) Interview with Kent Calder, director of SAIS Reischauer Center for East Asia Studies: Japan-US relations could deteriorate over beef issue

(8) Yutaka Iimura picked as ambassador to France

#### ARTICLES:

(1) Japan's sharing of US Marines relocation cost: Defense chief Nukaga's two preparatory steps -- secret meeting with US ambassador to Japan, visit to National Arlington National Cemetery to reduce Japan's actual spending less than that of US

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
April 27, 2006

Japan's share of the cost of relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam was reached an agreement on April 23 between Defense Agency Director General Fukushima Nukaga and US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. This newspaper looked into the backstage of a political settlement in the unusual ministerial negotiations after a number of rounds of senior working-level talks.

Nukaga took two preparatory steps on April 23 before meeting with Rumsfeld. One was a secret meeting with US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer. Nukaga enthusiastically told Schieffer:

"It is a good chance for the United States to realign US forces in Japan while Mr. Koizumi is prime minister and I am defense chief. (If the US does not agree to our proposal), you will miss your chance."

Schieffer, a friend of President George W. Bush, responded: "I think so. I will convey it to Secretary Rumsfeld." Schieffer has influence in the Defense Department.

TOKYO 00002311 002 OF 013

The other preparatory step Nukaga made was a visit to Arlington National Cemetery located in the suburbs of Washington. He offered a silent prayer for US soldiers, who were killed in the war. He made the decision to visit the cemetery after considering it overnight, since he had obtained information that Rumsfeld would hold talks with him after making a surprise visit to Iraq to inquire after injured US soldiers. A Japanese Embassy official in Washington had told him that if he started the talks with money, the talks would come to in a rupture in ten minutes.

At the outset of the meeting held in the evening, Nukaga told Rumsfeld that he had visited Arlington National Cemetery. He said eventually, "Japan has supported US efforts to fight terrorism and weapons of mass destruction for the sake of global peace and justice."

Rumsfeld, though a hawk politically, responded gently, "We appreciate Japan's contribution." His eyes were filled with tears. The talks started well.

However, Rumsfeld took a tough stance in them. He retained the stance of calling on Japan to bear 75% of the relocation cost. He underscored:

"It is unprecedented that an economic superpower like Japan spends only one percent of its gross domestic product (GDP). It was Japan's request that US Marines in Okinawa be relocated to Guam, wasn't it?"

Nukaga rebutted:

"The Japanese public will not accept the US proposal that Japan pay 75% of the total relocation cost. I want the US to calculate in detail as to how much is needed for the relocation of Marines."

Nukaga moreover introduced a compromise plan suggested by Schieffer that Japan would shoulder one-third of each: 1) spending from the Japanese government's general account; 2) investments and loans by Japan; and 3) costs to be shouldered by the United States.

Nukaga loudly proclaimed: "I cannot accept ballpark figures. Japan's share should be less than that of the United States. Prime Minister Koizumi shares the same view. I cannot give in on that point."

Nukaga asserted that Japan's real spending should be reduced because investments and loans would be returned but money from the government general account would not be paid back.

Their argument lasted for about one hour. After a break, Rumsfeld softened his stance, making some concessions to Nukaga.

In return, the US side asked the Japanese side for 1 billion dollars assistance for the construction of a highway that would connect a port and an Air Force base. Nukaga, however, turned down the request, saying, "It is possible to extend investments and loans, but grants are impossible."

The US final plan was that Japan should pay 59% or 6.09 billion dollars of the estimated 10.27 billion dollars. Japan's real money outlay will be 2.8 billion dollars, which is less than the

TOKYO 00002311 003 OF 013

3.18 billion dollars to be paid by the United States.

"If you don't accept this plan, let's end the talks," Rumsfeld said hinting at a rupture of the negotiations. He forced Nukaga to make a decision. The US plan was acceptable for Japan because Japan's share was within the amount agreed by Nukaga and the Finance Ministry.

Nukaga said, "We accept it." He and Rumsfeld reached an agreement after spending three hours negotiating.

Rumsfeld said with satisfaction, "It would be even better if the Defense Agency is upgraded by this to the status of a ministry."

(2) Japan-US alliance entering new phase, with Japan folded into US global strategy

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Full)  
April 25, 2006

Talks on the realignment of US forces in Japan have surmounted a crucial stage. Japan and the United States will now hold a 'two-plus-two' foreign and defense ministerial meeting of their security consultative committee in early May to reach a final accord. The US military's realignment in Japan has had the aim of building a closer partnership between the Self-Defense Forces and the US armed forces. It is also intended to bring about a high readiness so that they can respond to regional conflicts and other contingencies. This means that Japan will be completely folded into the United States' global strategy.

"This is a project that will end the 'postwar' (period) in the true sense of the word." With this, Takemasa Moriya, administrative deputy director general of the Defense Agency, accounted for the US military's realignment when he called on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in private at his office last month. "I know," Koizumi nodded. The premier then told Moriya to continue working together with Defense Agency Director General Fukushima Nukaga on the US military's realignment.

Postwar Japan chose to arm itself lightly and prioritize its economy while depending on the United States' military deterrence. However, eventually the Cold War came to an end. It was a prologue to the current age of regional conflicts and terrorist attacks. The notion of security has undergone a sea change. As a natural consequence, Tokyo and Washington began exploring a new relationship in the process of redefining their bilateral security alliance in 1996.

Koizumi was aware of that move, so he calls the bilateral security arrangements an "alliance." It is taken for granted in the international community that an alliance has military connotations. In Japan, a cabinet minister was once driven to

resign over his interpretation of the Japan-US relationship being an "alliance." Koizumi, however, had no hesitation. "I'll bring it to a settlement under my cabinet." With this, Koizumi voiced his unwavering resolve behind the scenes of the agreement reached this time between Japan and the United States over the realignment of US forces in Japan.

It is an inevitable task also for the United States to beef up its bilateral alliance with Japan.

TOKYO 00002311 004 OF 013

With the protracted deployment of US troops in Iraq, there has been increasing calls from veterans for US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to resign. President Bush defended his Pentagon chief. "He's been doing really well in the transformation of US forces to prepare for threats in the 21st century," Bush said.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001 prodded the United States to gear up for the mobility of its troops and outfits. In order to make up for the increasing burden of military costs, the United States asks its allies for their greater personnel contributions and fiscal outlays. This is the Bush administration's basic strategy. Meanwhile, the United States has been bogged down in a long, never-ending war. Veterans calling for Rumsfeld's resignation also admit to the significance of realigning US forces. "It's extremely important to realign US forces," retired Army Maj. Gen. John Batiste said.

The United States, in its global strategy, weighs its European allies and the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean as strongpoints. In the Asia-Pacific region, Guam and Japan are linchpins for its military operations. "So," one US military official says, "we will pull out of South Korea." The Pentagon's scenario is to integrate the command functionalities of Japanese and US forces and to deploy reinforcements to Okinawa in the event of an emergency.

"The United States' military spending accounts for more than 3% of gross domestic product, South Korea at 2.5%, and European countries between 1.5% and 2%. Japan is only at 1%." This is a pet phrase Rumsfeld always uses whenever he meets with lawmakers from Japan.

Tokyo and Washington squared off in their realignment talks over their respective shares of the cost of moving US Marines from Okinawa to Guam. Japan, in its standoff with the United States, was not unwilling to pay money. Washington, however, meant to gauge Tokyo's commitment to the international order and its stability.

While the Iraq war has been protracted, the international situation over the issue of Iran's nuclear development program has also been growing tense. For the United States, Japan was the last to negotiate with in the global transformation of US forces. If the Pentagon takes time to talk with Japan, the United States cannot transform its armed forces for the 21st century. The United States can no longer forego its military transformation.

Both Bush and Koizumi came into office in 2001. However, Koizumi will step down in September this year. Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi, who has pushed for cooperation with the United States, was defeated in a recent election. In the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, antiterror nations shaped a global coalition. Nowadays, this 2001 international regime is wavering.

Meanwhile, Koizumi, since coming into office in 2001, has restructured Japan. Under his 2001 political structure, Japan has fallen out of gear at home and abroad. For instance, Japan is now at odds with South Korea over an oceanographic survey around the archipelago of Takeshima islets. In addition, Japan and China remain unable to break the ice in their standoff. Moreover, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party was defeated in a recent by-election for the House of Representatives.

In East Asia, however, there are a number of uncertainties, such as the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait. Given such a situation in the region, the post-Koizumi leader-whomever may become prime minister after Koizumi-will not have a very broad range of options. Japan is currently faced with challenges in the process of working together with the United States to realign its military presence in Japan. These tasks have something in common with Japan's prospective pullout of SDF troops from Iraq. The alliance is now about to enter a new phase. Japan and the United States will further fuse not only in the area of military operations but also in the area of military costs.

(This report was written by Hiroshi Marutani, Washington, and Naoya Yoshino, Political Section.)

(3) Japan's share of cost of US force realignment: 3 trillion yen still a "conservative estimate"; Is Japan an automated cash dispenser? Swelling defense spending for building anti-terrorism networks

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Pp.26-27) (Abridged)  
April 27, 2006

News that Japan would have to bear 710 billion yen for the relocation of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam came as a surprise. Then, as if to add insult to injury, US Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Richard Lawless announced April 25 that Japan's share of the entire process of US force realignment would run to a total of 2.98 trillion yen over the next six to seven years. The under secretary also suggested that Japan's share could swell even

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more, calling 2.98 trillion yen a "conservative estimate." Is Japan simply a convenient "automated cash dispenser" for the United States? Does Japan really have to foot such a huge bill?

The news that Japan would have to shoulder 3 trillion yen for the US armed forces sped through base-hosting municipalities already being shaken by the relocation issue. Assemblyman Jungen Tamura of Iwakuni City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, disgustingly said, "Why is Japan so generous when it comes to US bases?" Tamura is also a member of Rimpeace, an organization that monitors US bases. On April 23, Katsusuke Ihara, an opponent of the relocation of carrier-based aircraft, won the city's mayoral race. Tamura sarcastically said:

"During the election campaign, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe even said that the government would shoulder school lunches and medical expenses in return for accepting the base relocation. In addition, the government seems to be willing to extend subsidies and several hundred billion yen. I wonder if such are included in the 3 trillion yen."

Zenko Nakamura, head of a citizens group opposing the relocation of Futenma Air Station to Nago, Okinawa, commented calmly: "Finally the US seems to have gone on the offensive. It's good that inconsistencies become clear this way."

Even Abe referred to 3 trillion yen as an "incredible sum of money" (tondemonai kingaku). What is the basis for such an amount?

Military analyst Motoaki Kamiura explained:

"It is well known that Japan cut a secret deal with the US for the reversion of Okinawa in 1972. Japan secretly paid 4 million dollars (1.2 billion yen approximately at today's currency value) for restoring the returned US bases to their original state, which was supposed to be shouldered by the US. I heard that if Tokyo and Washington reached an agreement to return part of

Kadena Air Base and Japan was forced as a result to pay the cost of returning soil contaminated with heavy metals, similar expenditures would be necessary."

Military journalist Tetsuo Maeda though that a plan may resurface to relocate night-landing facilities from Iwojima to Hiroshima. His logic is that the construction of a base in Henoko and the work to accommodate a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier would not cost 3 trillion yen, so there must be other major projects in the pipeline.

Maeda continued:

"It also depends on how you count it. US force realignment is designed to facilitate joint base use by lowering the barrier between the US military and Japan's Self-Defense Forces. The SDF and US military will jointly use the X-band radar to be deployed at the Air Self-Defense Force's Shariki detachment base as part of the missile defense system. The cost of those facilities may have been included in Japan's share."

To begin with, what is behind US force transformation, which will end up costing Japan so much?

It is an effort to create networks in other countries to jointly pursue the global war on terrorism with the US military, according to Hiromichi Umebayashi of Peace Depot, a nonprofit organization.

Umebayashi explained:

"The US is insisting that the Japan-US alliance should move from role sharing to power sharing, meaning that Japan should voluntarily join America's global strategy. It's a problem that such a critical choice is moving ahead steadily without the government having sought the Japanese people's concurrence."

Maeda also noted:

"The question is whether the town will become safe if it pays protection money to thugs. The missile defense system is designed to defend only the Tokyo metropolitan area and the US bases in Japan. Kyushu and other areas are not protected. The Defense Agency has admitted that chances are extremely slim for Japan to come under an armed attack. There is no need to spend such a large amount of money on national defense."

The Japanese government has been providing the US forces in Japan with 230 billion yen annually in host nation support (HNS). That budget will grow dramatically over the next several years. Is the Japan-US alliance worth that much money?

Professor Masaaki Gabe of the University of the Ryukyus stressed:

"The Iraq war has been costing the Pentagon 58 billion dollars (approximately 6.6 trillion yen) annually. The US wants to shift its financial burden onto its allies as much as possible, but

TOKYO 00002311 007 OF 013

there is no reason for Japan to pay for it."

People tend to justify supporting the Japan-US alliance in order to counter terrorism and meet the threats of China and North Korea.

Gabe took this view:

"The US military has declared that deployed aircraft carriers and the missile defense system would be sufficient to deal with the China threat. It also is unlikely that the threat to Japan of terrorism is on the rise. There is no longer a need for the Japan-US alliance. The principal reason for having one lies with Japan, since it has no goals regarding its relations with the world and Asia. No goals and no strategy. Japan just wants to maintain the status quo, and therefore, it is at America's beck and call."

On the political front as well, the US refused to back Japan's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat. And Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick has been rejecting meetings

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requested by Japanese diplomats and lawmakers. Unrequited love might lie beneath the Japan-US alliance.

Obirin University Prof. Akira Kato offered this view:

"The undercurrent of US force realignment is not political but technological. Although exchanges between Japanese and US lawmakers may have slackened off, such is not at all the case on the military front. The US military has been pursuing realignment to create a network-based system that would link intelligence and weapons. Japan's Self-Defense Forces are already part of that system. The ultimate goal is to integrate the US military and Japan's SDF, which is not possible under the Constitution. But the SDF would not be able to declare its independence from the US military. For instance, all satellite intelligence comes from the US military. To become independent, Japan needs to launch its own military satellites, but such a step would be criticized as a move to become a major military power."

Technologically speaking, Japan cannot opt for "military independence."

Given the situation, the government is likely to squeeze out 3 trillion yen by imposing a greater burden on the people.

Economist Noriko Konya explained:

"The sum of three trillion yen corresponds to 1% of the annual consumption tax, or over 40% of the public works spending. The government may try to scrape up the money by cutting deeper into such areas as social security, subsidies, and education, thus turning a blind eye to the public's difficulties."

Economic analyst Takuro Mori commented sternly:

"I don't understand why a four-member Japanese household has to pay 100,000 yen to build a new house for the US military. It won't cost that much to make all the highways free and help the condo scam victims. The government may try to raise the consumption tax rate to finance the US projects. The government holds a tremendous amount of US bonds. It should sell them. I've never heard of a country having paid money for the departure of 'occupation forces.'"

TOKYO 00002311 008 OF 013

(4) South Korean president aims to beef up political power by taking tough stance against Japan over Takeshima (Dokdo) issue; Japanese government perplexed by his statement; Repairing strained bilateral ties difficult for time being

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 26, 2006

South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun released on April 25 a special statement that he would determinedly respond to Japan's claim to the Takeshima (Dokdo) islets in the Sea of Japan. Since the territorial issue is a theme pulling at the heartstrings of South Korean people, Roh's hard-line stance is apparently aimed at recovering his political influence. All the more because South Korea is scheduled to conduct unified local elections in late May, Roh has no room for compromise with Japan on the Takeshima issue. Although Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said that Japan would respond calmly to Roh's comments, it is unlikely that Tokyo and Seoul will find common ground.

Immediately after the president's special statement, South Korean ruling and opposition parties released comments praising the president's tough stance.

"Japan should know the South Korean public's view that the Dokdo

issue is part of the issue of past history." (Open Uri Party)

"President Roh stated what should be said on behalf of the people." (Grand National Party)

It was unprecedented for both ruling and opposition parties to heap praise on President Roh, particularly since the two camps are facing off in the unified local elections coming up in late May. A Grand National Party source having communication channels to Japanese political circles revealed, saying, "If we criticize the president's statement, we will be called friendly to Japan, which will adversely affect the upcoming elections."

Takeshima is not just a bilateral issue but it will likely be made a domestic political issue of South Korea. Open Uri Party head Chong Dong Yong attempted to land on one of the islets in early March when Grand National Party representative Park Kun Hye was visiting Japan to meet with Prime Minister Koizumi. Chong's attempt was unsuccessful due to bad weather. A source familiar with the Open Uri Party admitted that Chong tried to play up the policy contrast with Park.

One political commentator said, "Should the government stir up national sentiments taking advantage of the Dokdo issue, it will be able to strengthen its impetus." In fact, support rate for the Roh government shot up from 35% to 50% in the poll conducted immediately after Roh criticized as "an act of justifying Japan's war of aggression" Shimane Prefecture's passing in March last year of an ordinance designating a "Takeshima Day".

Roh has stressed that he is rectifying the wrongdoings committed by past governments. He is trying to play up a tough stance of working on the issues left behind by the past governments by stressing his tough diplomacy regarding the Takeshima issue. He can make clear differences with the government of President Park Chong Hui that shelved the Takeshima issue when it concluded a treaty with Japan in 1965, as well as with the governments of

TOKYO 00002311 009 OF 013

President Kim Yong Sam and President Kim Dae Jung, which blurred South Korea's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in Japan-South Korea fisheries negotiations conducted from 1996 to 1999.

The view is that since South Korea effectively controls the disputed islets, it should continue calm diplomacy. However, a ranking Presidential Office official said, "We have no leeway to remain calm."

Many in the Japanese government have now reached the conclusion that it will be difficult to repair the strained bilateral ties for the time being. Japan cannot withdraw its territorial claim over Takeshima. The government's basic policy is that it will promote cooperation with South Korea on other areas, while continuing negotiations on the EEZ issue. Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe and Foreign Minister Taro Aso have dispatched messages calling on Seoul to improve bilateral relations, even though they have taken a hard-line stance against China. Abe and Aso, therefore, have increased their distrust of President Roh, who has stepped up his criticism of Japan.

Prime Minister Koizumi yesterday stated in a press interview: "Keeping a Japan-South Korea friendship is a major premise. I think the two countries should discuss the matter in order to find realistic measures to resolve it." He sought a cool-headed response.

There is a view in the Japanese government that South Korea will gain no benefits externally since it already effectively controls the disputed islets. However Roh seems to have made such remarks as economic cooperation and cultural exchanges being unable to help resolve this matter as a means of objecting to Koizumi's continuing to visit Yasukuni Shrine while stressing the need for "friendly ties between Japan and South Korea." The Foreign Ministry has taken Roh's statement seriously, with an official saying, "If Seoul links all issues to history, we will find it difficult to deal with them."



Regarding Japan's planned marine survey, over which the two countries were about to clash, Seoul and Tokyo have agreed to resume negotiations on the EEZ demarcation issue probably before the end of May. Diplomatic authorities have reached an understanding to resolve the issue through discussions.

Some government and ruling coalition officials have begun criticize Roh's statement released three days after the two governments had arrived at the agreement on the marine survey issue. The concern is that the negotiations on the demarcation issue may become an arena for a showdown between Tokyo and Seoul.

(5) Bright and dark sides of five years of Koizumi politics (Part 1): Koizumi-Bush honeymoon relationship strengthened Japan-US alliance

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged)  
April 26, 2006

"Relations with Japan are close, and I personally like Prime Minister (Junichiro) Koizumi. I closely cooperated with him on a variety of matters."

Delivering a speech in Washington April 10, US President George W. Bush played up his relationship of trust with Koizumi.

TOKYO 00002311 010 OF 013

Bush has been preaching the importance of the war on terror across the US on the back of growing criticism of the Iraq war. In such speeches, Bush has referred to his relationship of trust with Koizumi 13 times this year. The number stands out among Japanese prime ministers.

Japan-US relations, which have been described as the best ever by diplomatic officials of the two countries, have been supported largely by the relations of trust between Koizumi and Bush.

Relations between the two countries were sour during the Clinton administration. What turned them for the better in the Bush administration? Both Japan and the US are responsible for that.

During the Clinton era, the US government often used gaiatsu, or foreign pressure, for resolving bilateral problems. But the Bush administration has respected Japan's "independent decisions," concluding that gaiatsu ruined cooperative relations between the two countries.

Koizumi responded America's new stance with positive steps. Following 9/11, the prime minister decided to send Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels to the Indian Ocean to assist US forces. He also swiftly announced his support for America's military attack on Iraq and eventually deployed Ground Self-Defense Force troops to help Iraq's reconstruction efforts.

"There were other options, but Prime Minister Koizumi decided to send SDF troops," a former foreign minister noted.

Bush gave high scores to Koizumi's political style to make bold decisions and take risks.

Koizumi and Bush have become closer since 9/11, according to diplomatic officials of the two countries.

The Bush-Koizumi "honeymoon relationship" has significantly strengthened the Japan-US alliance.

At the Japan-US summit in Kyoto last November, Koizumi said to Bush: "It is because Japan-US relations are good that we have been able to maintain good ties with all other countries, including, China, the Republic of Korea, and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)." In response, Bush said: "It is a good idea and that, if Japan and the United States have good relations, China also would want to strengthen ties with Japan and the United States."

Bush invited Koizumi to the US for late June. Koizumi will be the first Japanese prime minister to make an official visit to the US in seven years, the last one being in April 1999 when Keizo Obuchi was premier. Bush will host a White House dinner party for Koizumi, as with the case of a state guest.

Bush only had a luncheon with Chinese President Hu Jintao, who visited the US for the first time after assuming the current post. The US government's higher treatment of Koizumi over Hu, a chief of state, reflects the deepening Japan-US alliance.

(6) Bright and dark sides of five years of Koizumi politics (Part 2): Consideration for ally boosting Japan's base burden

TOKYO 00002311 011 OF 013

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
April 27, 2006

"The Japanese government will shoulder a huge amount of money. Japan will pay part (6.09 billion dollars) of the cost of relocating Okinawa-based Marines to Guam in addition to approximately 20 billion dollars to finance domestic relocation." So said Richard Lawless, US deputy defense under secretary, yesterday. He indicated that Japan would pay an estimated 26 billion dollars or approximately 3 trillion yen of the overall US force realignment cost over six to seven years.

In this case, Japan will have to defray 500 billion yen annually. This figure is twice as large as its annual contribution to the cost of stationing US forces in Japan (237.8 billion yen for fiscal 2005).

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said in a press conference yesterday: "I do not know the content of the reported figure. But it is my impression that it is an incredible sum of money."

The realignment of US forces in Japan is part of the global US force transformation being promoted by the Bush administration. The US therefore naturally should pay the relocation cost.

In the force realignment in Japan, though, Okinawa's base burden will be reduced, and many base facilities will be transferred to other locations in the nation, whose costs should be borne by Japan. In addition, Japan has also agreed to pay 59% of the overall cost of relocating Okinawa-based Marines to Guam, though such payment should be made by the US, reflecting Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's stance of prioritizing the Japan-US alliance.

The decision stems from the prime minister's consideration to the US, based on his determination that if Japan refuses to pay, the US Congress may react sharply, and his ally, President Bush, may be driven into corner.

Furthermore, Koizumi has dispatched Ground Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops to Iraq on a reconstruction mission. Although an increasing number of countries are beginning to withdraw their troops under the worsening security situation there, Japan has continued to deploy SDF troops.

If Japan, an important ally of the US, pulls troops out of Iraq amid the political standstill there, it could give the impression that the Iraq war has ended in failure. In such a case, President Bush will find himself isolated.

Japan has deployed oil supply vessels in the Indian Ocean since the US military launched military operation in Afghanistan. It has yet to devise any plan to terminate the mission.

Koizumi has established close personal ties with President Bush. In supporting Bush on the basis of such ties, Japan has responded to US requests for financial assistance appropriate to its strength as a nation. With Koizumi's resignation from the current post this September, however, the current honeymoon between the Japanese and US leaders will come to an end.

How will Japan-US relations change under a Koizumi successor? If bilateral ties become exacerbated, the vulnerability of the Japan-US alliance, which depends greatly on the Bush-Koizumi ties, may

TOKYO 00002311 012 OF 013

stand out in bold relief.

(7) Interview with Kent Calder, director of SAIS Reischauer Center for East Asia Studies: Japan-US relations could deteriorate over beef issue

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
April 27, 2006

Beef has become a major political issue between Japan and the US. Dissatisfaction is growing stronger at Japan among members of the Congress lobbying for beef industry interests.

Unless the beef issue is resolved during Prime Minister Koizumi's term in office, US-Japan relations could deteriorate. On the political front, the prime minister has moved bilateral ties forward, but he failed to produce any positive results in resolving the most difficult of issues, the agricultural sector, including beef. There also are trade issues other than agriculture that the two countries face. For instance, many American firms are dissatisfied with Japan's process of privatizing postal savings and postal insurance services, criticizing the process as ambiguous. For now, the US government's policy interest has been directed at the security area, and the economic area has been set aside. Under such a situation, discontent is growing among private-sector firms that cannot receive government financial support.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the US, Prime Minister Koizumi has found it considerably easier to cooperate with the US government on the security front, and his interest has been on the political area. Though this is merely a personal view, the prime minister does not seem well versed in economic issues. It might be said that he has been lucky because the US government has given priority to the security area over the economic front.

There is no need to worry, though, that Japan-US relations will get worse immediately after the prime minister steps down. Should Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, who is regarded as the most likely candidate, become prime minister, he supposedly will step up efforts to strengthen cooperative relations with the US on the security front in dealing with missile defense, US force realignment, and other issues. I believe he will continue the current administration's reform drive based on market principles.

I think that former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda is also a good candidate. He has maintained favorable relations with the US. He knows much about the need to have a pipeline and good channels to Russia, so if Mr. Fukuda becomes prime minister, his administration would have a high interest in energy policy.

(8) Yutaka Iimura picked as ambassador to France

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
April 26, 2006

The government decided in a cabinet meeting on April 25 to appoint Yutaka Iimura, incumbent ambassador to Indonesia, as ambassador to France and Andorra, effective as of April 25. Shigeru Nakamura, currently director general of the Intelligence and Analysis Service, has been named as ambassador to Saudi Arabia; Seiji Kojima, a Japan International Cooperation Agency

TOKYO 00002311 013 OF 013

(JICA) director, as ambassador to Pakistan; Haruhisa Takeuchi, chief of the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center, as director general of the Intelligence and Analysis Service. The

appointments of Nakamura, Kojima, and Takeuchi are effective as of May 8.

Ambassador-designate Yutaka Iimura: Left the University of Tokyo in mid-course; entered the Foreign Ministry in 1969; has been serving as ambassador to Indonesia since July 2002; after serving in such posts as director general of the Economic Cooperation Bureau and deputy vice minister of Minister's Secretariat, age 59; hails from Tokyo.

Ambassador-designate Shigeru Nakamura: Graduated from Hitotsubashi University; joined the Foreign Ministry in 1973; has been serving as director general of the Intelligence and Analysis Service since August 2004, after serving as ambassador in charge of Iraqi Assistance Coordination; age 57; Tokyo.

Ambassador-designate Seiji Kojima: Graduated from the University of Tokyo; joined the Foreign Ministry in 1972; has been a JICA director since October 2004; age 58; born in Aichi Prefecture.

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